

AFRICA OIL+GAS REPORT · NIGERIA

Nigeria's Major Energy Firms Boycott Cape Town Summit Over Xenophobia Concerns

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The upcoming Africa Energy Week (AEW) in Cape Town is set to proceed without the participation of Nigeria's top energy companies, as concerns over xenophobia in South Africa have prompted a notable boycott. In contrast, Angola's state hydrocarbon company, Sonangol, has confirmed its commitment to attend the annual summit, underscoring a divergence in how African national oil companies are responding to the political climate surrounding the event.

Africa Energy Week is one of the continent's most prominent gatherings for the oil, gas, and energy sector, routinely drawing operators, investors, service companies, and government representatives from across the continent and beyond. The absence of Nigeria's leading energy firms represents a significant gap at the conference table, given Nigeria's status as one of Sub-Saharan Africa's largest hydrocarbon producers and a major draw for international investment and service activity.

The decision by Nigerian companies to stay away appears rooted in broader tensions around the treatment of foreign nationals in South Africa, a recurring flashpoint that has periodically strained diplomatic and business relations between South Africa and other African states. Xenophobic incidents in South Africa have historically affected Nigerian citizens and businesses operating in the country, and the boycott signals that these concerns have now escalated to the point of influencing high-level corporate engagement decisions.

Sonangol's confirmed attendance, by contrast, positions Angola as a constructive and visible player at AEW. Angola has been accelerating its upstream licensing activity and actively courting international partners, and a strong presence at Cape Town reinforces that strategic posture. For Norwegian service companies, Sonangol's engagement at AEW is a practical signal that Angola remains open for business and that senior counterparts will be accessible on the sidelines of the summit.

The boycott by Nigerian firms, meanwhile, does not diminish Nigeria's underlying project pipeline, but it does create uncertainty around near-term deal-making and relationship-building opportunities that AEW typically facilitates. Companies hoping to advance conversations with Nigerian counterparts around ongoing or prospective upstream and midstream projects may find the Cape Town forum less productive than in previous years and should consider alternative engagement pathways into the Nigerian market.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies attending AEW in Cape Town should prioritise engagement with Sonangol representatives given Angola's confirmed high-level presence, as this creates direct access for subsea, drilling, and FPSO players tracking Angolan upstream activity. For those with Nigerian client relationships, the boycott warrants proactive outreach outside the AEW forum — Lagos-based meetings or bilateral engagements may be necessary to maintain momentum on Nigerian project pipelines. Companies should monitor whether the boycott broadens or resolves ahead of the event, as it may affect the overall quality of Nigerian deal flow at Cape Town this cycle.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Sonangol's confirmed AEW attendance offers Norwegian subsea and FPSO contractors a concrete opportunity to advance discussions on Angola's active deepwater programme directly with the state operator.
- **Drilling:** With Nigerian majors absent from AEW, drilling service companies should seek alternative channels to engage Nigerian operators rather than relying on Cape Town as a primary touchpoint this year.

- **Service:** The political friction underlying the Nigerian boycott is worth tracking as a business climate indicator for any Norwegian service firm with South Africa-based regional offices serving Nigerian clients.
- **LNG:** Angola's proactive AEW presence reinforces its positioning as a stable partner for LNG-adjacent infrastructure conversations, relevant for Norwegian companies with liquefaction or gas processing capabilities.

[Original source: Africa Oil+Gas Report →](#)

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